

Cautioning the people of the Qur'ān and scholars against showing off

Allah Almighty says, *“Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him”* (4:36) and the Almighty also says, *“So let him who hopes to meet his Lord act rightly and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.”* (18:110). Muslim reported from Abū Hurayra that he heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, “The first of people to be judged on the Day of Rising will be a man who was martyred. He will be brought forward and will be informed of the blessings he had and will acknowledge them. Allah will ask, ‘What did you do with them?’ He will say, ‘I fought for You until I was martyred.’ Allah will say, ‘You lie. Rather you fought so it would be said, “A bold man!” And so it was said.’ Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire.

“There will also be a man who studied knowledge and taught it and recited the Qur'ān. He will be brought and informed of his blessings which he will acknowledge. Allah will say, ‘What did you do with them?’ He will reply, ‘I studied knowledge and taught it and I recited the Qur'ān for You.’ Allah will say, ‘You lie. Rather you studied so that it would be said, “A scholar!” and you recited so that it would be said, “He is a reciter!” And so it was said.’ Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire.

“There will also be a man to whom Allah gave a lot of wealth and all sorts of property. He will be brought and informed of his blessings which he will acknowledge. Allah will ask, ‘What did you do with them?’ He will answer, ‘There was no path in which You like spending to be done but that I spent in it for You.’ Allah will say, ‘You lie. Rather you did it so that it would be said, “He is

generous.” and so it was said.’ Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire.”

In the *Raqā’iq*, Ibn al-Mubārak transmitted from al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abdu’l-Muṭṭalib that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “This *dīn* will be victorious until it passes the sea and until you plunge into the sea with horses in the Way of Allah Almighty. Then there will come a people who recite the Qur’ān. When they recite it, they will say, ‘Who reads more than us? Who knows more than us?’” Then he turned to his Companions and said, “Do you think that there will be any good in those?” “No,” they replied. He said, “Those are from you and those are from this Community and those are the fuel of the Fire.” Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmidhī transmitted that the Messenger of Allah said, “Anyone who learns knowledge which should be learned for the sake of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, only to obtain by it goods of this world, will not experience the scent of the Garden on the Day of Rising.” At-Tirmidhī said it is a *ḥasan ḥadīth*.

It is reported that Abū Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Seek refuge with Allah from the Pit of Sorrow.” They asked, “Messenger of Allah, what is the Pit of Sorrow?” He replied, “It is a valley in Hell from which Hell seeks refuge a hundred times a day.” He was asked, “Messenger of Allah, who will enter it?” He replied, “Those who recite to show off their actions.” (*gharīb*) In the book of Asad ibn Mūsā it is reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “There is a valley in Hell, and Hell seeks refuge from the evil of that valley seven times a day. In that valley is a pit, and Hell and that valley seek refuge from the evil of that pit. In that pit is a serpent and Hell, the valley and the pit seek refuge with Allah from the evil of that serpent seven times. Allah has prepared it for the wretched among those who know the Qur’ān and disobey Allah.”

So the one who knows the Qur’an and seeks knowledge should fear Allah regarding himself and act sincerely for Allah. If he does anything which is disliked, he should hasten to repent and begin to

show sincerity in his goal and his actions. The one who knows the Qur'ān must guard himself more carefully than others, as he has a wage which others do not have. At-Tirmidhī transmitted that Abū'd-Dardā' reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah revealed in one of the Books to one of the Prophets, 'Warn those who seek understanding for other than the *dīn* and learn for other than action and seek this world by the deeds of the Next world. They will wear sheep-skins in front of people to give the impression of meekness while their hearts are like the hearts of wolves. Their tongues are sweeter than honey while their hearts are more bitter than aloes. They will try to deceive Me and will make light of Me. I will send them trials which will leave even the forbearing bewildered.'"

Aṭ-Ṭabarī transmitted in *Adab an-Nufūs* that one of the Companions of the Prophet said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Do not try to deceive Allah. If anyone tries to deceive Allah, Allah will deceive him. It is his own self which is deceived if he were only aware." They asked, "Messenger of Allah, how can someone try to deceive Allah?" He replied, "By doing what Allah has commanded you while you seek other than Him by it. Fear showing-off. It is *shirk*. The one who shows off will be summoned before witnesses on the Day of Rising by four names which he is called: 'O unbeliever! O loser! O perfidious! O deviant! Your actions are lost and your reward is nullified. You have no share today. Seek your reward from those you acted for, O impostor!'"

It is reported from 'Alqama that 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said, "How will you feel when you are enveloped by a trial in which children grow old and the old become senile and people will act according to an innovated *sunna*? When any of it is changed, it will be said, 'The *sunna* has been changed.'"

He was asked, "When will that be, Abū 'Abdu'r-Rahmān?" He replied, "When your reciters are many and your *fuqahā*' are few, and your leaders are many and your trusted ones are few, and this world is sought by the actions of the Next World and people learn *fiqh* for other than the *dīn*." Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna said, "I heard that Ibn 'Abbās

said, ‘If those who know the Qur’ān had taken it as it should be taken and in the way that is proper, Allah would love them. But they seek this world by it and so Allah hates them and they are indulgent with people.’” It is related from Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī about the words of the Almighty, “*They will be bundled headfirst into it, they and the misled*” (26:94), “This refers to people who describe the truth and justice with their tongues and then oppose it by espousing something other than that.”